

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II
101 Marietta St., Suite 2900, Atlanta, GA 30323
Tel. 404-331-5503 or 7878

No.: II-96-75

Contacts: Ken Clark 404-331-5503
Roger Hannah 404-331-7878

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT RATED GOOD
IN ALL FOUR AREAS OF NRC ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Sequoyah nuclear power plant received performance ratings of good in plant operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) of the facility.

The SALP report was sent September 6 to the Tennessee Valley Authority, which operates the facility near Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee. It evaluates the plant's performance from January 8, 1995, through July 27 of this year.

NRC and TVA officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 18, at the Sequoyah site. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available after the meeting to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

NRC systematic assessment reports rate licensees in four functional areas — plant operations, maintenance, engineering, and plant support — and assign ratings of Category 1, 2 or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas was superior, good or adequate. The report on Sequoyah gives the plant a Category 2 rating in plant operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support, indicating “good” performance. In the previous SALP report in February 1995, the plant also received 2's in all four areas.

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator Stewart Ebnetter said “overall performance of the Sequoyah plant was assessed as good.” He mentioned an excessive number of reactor trips early in the assessment period with an improving trend toward the end of the period.

Ebnetter said improvement was noted in shutdown operations and personnel error reduction, but “weak areas were found in root cause evaluation and controls for infrequently performed evolutions.” He said maintenance performance continued to be good although challenges also remain in that area.

In the letter, Ebnetter highlighted good engineering performance in design controls, backlog reduction and hardware modifications, but said there was weaker performance in corrective actions and support of operations and maintenance.

In the plant support area, Ebnetter said performance was good, particularly in radiological and effluent controls and security. However, he said “weaknesses were found in emergency planning maintenance while resolution of long term fire protection issues continued to be slow.”

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EDITORS: A copy of the full SALP report is available from this office. SALP reports are also available on the NRC's internet web site (<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>) and by e-mail subscription. To receive SALP reports by e-mail as they are issued, send an e-mail to listproc@nrc.gov with the following message: subscribe salp yourfirstname yourlastname.